

More on the

Recalling the dream

"When we let freedom ring ... we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

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From left: Lindsey Greene, Erica Smith and Brian Kimble. Lindsey and Brian are this year's Martin Luther King scholarship recipients, and Erica was given an Early Recognition Award. The honors are sponsored by St. Bridget's Church.

In these closing words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s renowned 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech, the famed civil-rights leader made a passionate plea for racial and religious tolerance.

Chances are, he would have been quite pleased with a ceremony that took place in early January. It was held at a Catholic church, St. Bridget's in Rochester, for the purpose of awarding scholarships to two non-Catholics — one black and one white.

The memory of Dr. King, who was assassinated in 1968 at the age of 39, is often recalled at this time of year, beginning with Martin Luther King Day in January and continuing through Black History Month, which is February. As part of these observances, the 13th annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship Award program took place Jan. 9 at St. Bridget's.

Two high-school seniors — Brian Kimble of Greece Odyssey High School and Lindsey Greene of Pittsford Sutherland — were each designated for \$750 scholarships. The award recognizes young people who embrace the ideals of Dr. King through their leadership abilities and active faith lives. They must also have an academic average of C+ or above. Guidance counselors, pastors, and/or neighbors recommend nominees.

The scholarship program also features an Eighth Grade Early Recognition winner, who receives a plaque rather than a scholarship. This year's recipient is Erica Smith of Pittsford Middle School.

Mary Dwellley, a scholarship committee member, stressed that award winners are chosen based on their virtues, rather than any particular religion or background.

"Our initial and long term interest is supporting students who emulate the values of Dr. King and his incredible Christian commitment," Dwellley said.

That came as a pleasant surprise for Brian, who is white and attends

Hope Lutheran Church in Greece.

"At first I thought, 'They're probably looking for a black person,'" said Brian, 17.

As it turned out, Brian said he felt "a welcoming feeling" upon attending the ceremony at St. Bridget's, a parish with one of the largest African-American populations in the Rochester Diocese.

The other scholarship winner, Lindsey, who is black, said she felt "very honored" to be spotlighted at the award presentation.

"I didn't expect as huge a ceremony as it was," said Lindsey, 17, who attends New Bethel CME Church in Rochester.

The program featured a keynote address by Rochester Mayor William A. Johnson Jr. Also that day, the award recipients recited essays they had written during the nomination process.

Lindsey said that while preparing her essay, she came to realize that Dr. King was not only an excellent orator, but that he acted on his words.

"He was a man of God. That was an important attribute," Lindsey said. "He would use his gifts to work for his ideals. I said (in the essay) that I would like to do that also."

Meanwhile, Brian learned more about Dr. King by surfing the Internet. He noted that his essay was also influenced by a mission trip he took to the African country of Botswana last summer with a Texas-based Christian teen group, Teen Mania.

"We shared the Gospel with many people who had not heard it," Brian said.

The scholarship money is officially awarded once a recipient begins college. Both Lindsey and Brian said that their awards will provide a needed financial boost come this fall.

"Any kind of financial aid I can get is excellent," said Lindsey, who hopes to attend Rice University in Houston and eventually become a surgeon.

"Anything helps," agreed Brian, who is looking to attend Union College in Schenectady to study engineering.

The award was begun by parishioners and staff of St. Bridget's Church in 1986, the same year that Dr. King's birthday was first observed as a national holiday. This year's award ceremony marked the first time that two high-school seniors, rather than one, were awarded scholarships. Brian and Lindsey were selected from among 17 nominees.

"It really has to do with the generosity of the parishioners," said Dwellley, who belongs to St. Bridget's.

Dwellley remarked that the scholarship program brings together some remarkable students and a caring parish.

"There's just such hope and promise. You just see the goodness of these (teens), and of the families and community supporting this," Dwellley said.

**COMING NEXT WEEK:
SCOUT SUNDAY**